



Adoption of Dashboards Is About Presentation as Much as Data

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AMR Research closed its spring conference with a panel discussion titled “Enterprise Dashboards: The Best of the Best.” The most successful dashboard implementations blend form and substance.

The Bottom Line: Effort dedicated to data model design, architecture, and performance implications is important, but the best of the best dedicate significant resources to understand and address the presentation requirements of the various constituencies and the context of how the data is used.

What it means: We analyzed a number of uses of dashboards beyond the traditional executive information systems. However, one key to broader user adoption was the layout of information or the presentation of decision tools. Consulting firm **SBI**, through its acquisitions, and **Novell** have numerous examples of well-constructed dashboards they’ve built for clients that target adoption rather than quick deployment. **The Takeaway:** Clients emphasized that their success was mainly because of the time spent up front on the design and layout before deploying. One client saved more than \$10M tying together key performance measures from across the business; it used design to hold the business users together and manage migration up the chain of users.

Assuredly, there were many levels of technical support for scorecards and dashboards-- **Microsoft PowerPoint** to portals. However, users were adamant about the absolute requirement on ease-of-use. There are big returns when users don’t print reports or spend days collecting data. Managers report that they are more proactive when data is presented in a crisp decision-making context.

Conclusion: Users should avoid simply presenting data that supports endless drilldown with little context, or else they will accelerate access to the digital equivalent to reams of paper. The development of dashboards for each management level does not always require the help of a system integrator. However, when multiple organizations are involved and cross-functional processes are deployed, only those with the excellent change management capabilities should try to go it alone.

--*Marc McCluskey, John Hagerty*

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